To Catherine it seemed that what Stefano needed was a more strenuous effort and more vigorous resolution to free himself. " Time is lost in waiting to untie," she wrote to him, " and thou art not sure of having it. It is better to cut decisively with a true and holy zeal. I would have thee, all manfully, set thyself free, and answer Mary who is calling thee with the greatest love, and the blood of these glorious martyrs, who with such great fire of love gave their blood for love of the blood, and their life for the love of life. It all boils, inviting thee and the others to come and endure, for the glory and praise of the name of God and Holy Church, and to put your virtue to the test. For into this holy city, of which God showed the dignity by calling it His garden, into this garden He has called His servants ; saying now is the time for them to come to test the gold of their virtues. Now let us not act as though we were deaf; if our ears be stopped up by the cold, let us take the blood which is hot because mingled with fire, and let us wash them out, and all deafness will be taken away. Hide thyself in the wounds of Christ crucified ; fly from before the world, leave the house of thy parents, fly into the cavern of the side of Christ crucified, that thou mayest come to the knd of promise. I say this same to Pietro, too. Place yourselves up at the table of the Cross, and there, all drunk with blood, take the food of souls, enduring pain, insults, mockery, and abuse, hunger, thirst, and nakedness, rejoicing with that sweet Paul, the Chosen Vessel, in persecution for Christ crucified. If thou wilt cut, as I have said, endurance will be thy glory ; otherwise, no, but it would be anguish to thee, and thy shadow would make thee afraid."[1]

Shortly before this, Stefano had been captured by a band of marauders in the Sienese contado, and released as soon as he called upon her name. Catherine took this as another sign to her disciple to free himself from the bonds that still bound him to the world, and give himself entirely to the service of God ; then, only, would he be delivered from the enemies of the soul

[1] Letter 329 *(z6z).* I quote from the original in the Biblioteca Comunale of Siena.